

What will be, must be: Or, Future Contingencies no Contingencies.

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IN A
LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. JOHN NORMAN:

OR,

A Short Review and Fair State of the Points
in Controversy between us.

By SAMUEL FANCOURT.

SARUM:

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Wm. L. G. ...
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T H E P R E F A C E.

IT mayn't be improper in this Place to take a little Notice of Mr. *Norman's* unexpected Apology, in the Introduction of his Letter, for his publick Animadversions upon my Essay.

The Case stands thus ; I gave him a Sketch of my Thoughts upon Preſcience in Writing. He obliged me with his Remarks upon it. I obſerved in Answer, how far I was ſo happy as to agree with him, and in what Particulars I cou'd not as yet perceive the Force of his Reasonings, and was therefore under a Neceſſity to differ from him. Upon this he drops the Debate, and leaves me under the full Weight of my Difficulties. And yet “ he was a little “ ſurprized it ſeems, (and not a little offended) “ to find my Reply or a good Part of it made “ publick ; and that they were his own Ob- “ jections (and as well as he cou'd remember) “ in his own Words, that I had answered, “ though his Name was not mentioned”. But why ſhou'd it ſurprize him, that I ſought for *publick Help*, when *private Satisfaction* was deny'd me ? Or, why not Mr. *Norman's* Objections as well as *another Man's*, ſince his Name was *not mentioned* ? And why not in *his own Words*, ſince they were *his own Objections* ? His were, but a *few* of the *many* I have taken Notice of, and which were communicated to

me in private : And yet he is the only Person, as I remember, who has shew'd himself displeased at this promiscuous and publick Reply to them. Well, " as things stood, it wou'd, " he apprehends, have been more friendly, " if I had left every Thing of his out of the " Debate ". But why *more friendly* to have passed by his Objections as *trifling*? I'm sure it wou'd not have been *more just*, had I suppressed them as *unanswerable*. Tho' had he desired it in Season, his Request wou'd have been sacred with me. And yet he might at least have guess'd at my Intention, by what I had done already in my *three Letters*, where I have taken the same Freedom with one of his Objections without Rebuke. He is pleased indeed to speak something diminutively concerning the *Accuracy* of his *written Letter*; whereas had it been true, who wou'd have imputed the *Inaccuracy* to Mr. *Norman* more than to *another*? Since my *Correspondents* were *many*, and their *Names* not *mentioned*. Or, will his publick Apology for it correct any single Impropriety, or screen him from the Remarks of the Captious? But " as he was not " solicitous about Exactness in the Arrangement of the Thoughts contained in that Letter, nor in the manner of expressing them, so " he did not (he tells me) think a Copy of it " worth preserving ". And my Reply to it had, perhaps, the same Fate; else it is not easy to account for his intire Silence as to several material things, which an ingenuous Opponent must, I conceive, either have endeavour'd to refute

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fute, or have frankly yielded to me. But to pass this by ; if I who have seen *both Letters*, may be reckoned a competent Judge ; The *Propriety* of the *Diction*, the *Disposition* of the *Sentiments*, and the *Civility* in that *written* one, are in no respect inferior to what he has shewn since in these his *printed Animadversions*. But a poor Excuse is better than none at all, when we are inclined to be angry ; or may stand in need of an Apology for such a Conduct in our *publick* Performances, which intimate Friendship and the most obliging Correspondence in *private* might seem to forbid.

“ However, as what I have done, he tells me, gives him no great Uneasiness ; so it will, he presumes, occasion none to me, that he is one of the many thousands, that think me very much mistaken”. And he presumes very right ; for why shou’d this occasion any Uneasiness unto *me*, more than it shou’d to *him* ? That I am one of the many *ten thousands*, that think Mr. Norman very much mistaken also, in supposing *that any can prevent what will be* ; or, in *extending the eternal Foreknowledge of God beyond the Decree*. Every Calvinist to a Man, I need not tell him, are either for holding both, or for giving up of both ; and will but smile at the Person, who shall amuse them with such *Futurities* as *may never be* ; tho’ were it otherwise, is *Truth always with the Multitude* ?

Well, tho’ he thinks me mistaken as to the *Means* ; yet the *End* I aim at, he allows to be *right* : “ That my Design is good, he can make

“ no

“no doubt of. And it is apparent, he says,
 “that a Zeal for the *Honour* of God’s *moral*
 “*Perfections*, and a Perswasion that the best of
 “Beings cannot be cleared from having a *cul-*
 “*pable* Concern in the sinful Conduct of his
 “Creatures, but upon my Principles, led me
 “into my Scheme of Thoughts”. Now, be-
 lieve me, I had rather have a *Design* that is
apparently good, tho’ it may be my misfortune
 to be otherways *erroneous*, than have the *most*
Orthodox Faith without it. And had the an-
 gry Gentlemen he speaks of, the same good
Design in view, methinks for the *Design* *jake*
 they might have abated their *Censures*, at
 least the *Severity* of them. Must not such
 Censurers be as *unreasonable* as *severe* to condemn
the Error (if it be an Error) as *dangerous*, and
 yet to *blame the Man* for using the *likeliest*
Means to get clear of it? I never hope to see
 that happy Day, when Christians shall be of
one Mind in the *great Things* of Christianity,
 while it is made such a Crime to *speake our*
Minds. But as the Reflections of such *fiery*
Zealots (as he justly observes) are both *unge-*
nerous and *uncharitable*; so he kindly assures
 me, he “shall think it his *Duty* to be my Ad-
 vocate” against them. Very obliging indeed!
 Only is it not a little unaccountable, that what
 my Friend shou’d think his *Duty* in one Part
 of his Letter, shou’d be so very little his *Prac-*
tice in the other? Here, had his Inclination
 been as strong as his Conviction, how might
 he have expostulated with Men of such an in-
 temperate Spirit, and have told them (as an
 eximious

eximious Author expresses it;) “ There is no-
 “ thing, Brethren, in which Men more deceive
 “ themselves than in what the World calls
 “ Zeal. It is certain, Sirs, where it is once
 “ laudable and prudential, it is an hundred
 “ Times criminal and erroneous.

“ I wou’d have every zealous Man of you
 “ examine his Heart thoroughly, and I be-
 “ lieve, he will often find, that what he calls
 “ a Zeal for his Religion, is either PRIDE or
 “ ILL-NATURE. A Man who differs from
 “ another in Opinion sets himself above him in
 “ his own Judgment, and in several Particulars
 “ pretends to be the wiser Person. This is a
 “ a great Provocation to the proud Man, and
 “ gives a keen Edge to what he calls his Zeal.
 “ And that this is the case very often, we may
 “ observe from the Behaviour of some of the
 “ most Zealous for *Orthodoxy*, who have often
 “ great Friendships and Intimacies with vitious
 “ immoral Men, provided they do but agree
 “ with them in the same Scheme of Belief.
 “ The reason is, because the vitious Believer
 “ gives the Precedency to the virtuous Man,
 “ and allows the good Christian to be the wor-
 “ thier Person, at the same time he cannot
 “ come up to his Perfections.

“ On the contrary, it is certain Gentlemen,
 “ if our Zeal were true and genuine, we shou’d
 “ be much more angry with a *Sinner* than an
 “ *Heretick*, since there are several Cases which
 “ may excuse the latter before his great Judge,
 “ but none which can excuse the former.

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How might he tell them also (as that same Author goes on) “ ILL-NATURE is another
 “ dreadful Imitator of Zeal. Many a good
 “ Man may have a natural Rancour and Ma-
 “ lice in his Heart, which has been in some
 “ measure quelled and subdued by Religion;
 “ but if it finds any Pretence of breaking out,
 “ which does not seem to him inconsistent with
 “ the Duties of a Christian, it throws off all
 “ Restraint, and rages in its full Fury. Zeal
 “ is therefore a great ease to a malicious Man,
 “ by making him believe he does God service,
 “ whilst he is gratifying the Bent of a perverse
 “ revengeful Temper. I love, Brethren to see
 “ a Man zealous in a good Matter, especially
 “ when his Zeal shews it self for advancing
 “ Morality and promoting the Happiness of
 “ Mankind. Let them therefore (Says the
 “ same Author) advise this Generation of
 “ Wranglers for their own and for the publick
 “ Good, to Act at least so consistently with
 “ themselves as not to burn with Zeal for Ir-
 “ religion, and with Bigottry for Non-Senses”.

But alas! my dutiful Advocate instead of labouring such Topicks as these to abate their Fury, puts the Argument in the most invidious Light to irritate their Spirits and provoke their Rage. He artfully changes the true State of the Question, and his resigned Admirers are made to believe, That it is a Dispute, not about the *Object* of Foreknowledge, but about *Foreknowledge* it self; Not whether there be any *future Contingencies* to be fore-seen, but whether God *fore-sees* them.

What

What will be, must be :

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Future Contingencies, no Contingencies.

Reverend Sir,



T is kind in you to accept of so small a Present as that of my Essay. It was designed, I assure you, as an Instance of my *Respect*; tho' you, perhaps, might interpret it as a *Challenge*. I have read your *Remarks* upon that Part of it which relates to *Prescience*; am glad you think I have not *trifled* with the Subject, and hope you are not offended, that any Notion which looks with so *friendly an Aspect* upon the *Purity* and *Love* of the *Creator*, is the *Creature's Favourite*. You had heard of my *Reply* long before this, but that I waited for those *other Animadversions*, you made the World to expect would be soon published. I was the more desirous to have seen them first, because they were, you tell us, to be wrote by a *better Hand*

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27. than your own, *a very ingenious Gentleman, and worthy Divine of the Establishment.* It is now above Eight Months, since we were put in Expectation of this curious Performance. What it is that has really delay'd the Publication of it, is best known to the Gentleman and your self. But since his Disquisitions seem to be considered by you as a kind of *Supplement* to your own Letter, and are what *will, you are perswaded, be very acceptable, especially to such as are acquainted with abstract Reasoning:* It becomes me to suspend my *main Answer*, 'till the World hath seen that *elaborate Piece.* However, I thought it not improper in the mean time, to take a *short Review* of the points in Controversy. By which it will not only appear, how far we are agreed about them, but also that Mr. *Norman*, for his part, has quite mistook the grand Question, or at least has fairly given it up.

The *Principles* upon which I go, and that the *Reader* was desired in my *Preface* to take particular Notice of, may be reduced to the following Heads.

First, That some things *have been*, which might really *never have been*, and that the Creature's *Sin* and *Destruction* are of this number. The *Business* of that part of my Essay which concerns *Liberty*, is to explain and settle this Point. There I have discuss'd the *moral Agency* of the accountable Creature, considered in its *original State*; and have observed that a *moral Agent* is one, who is capable of

of a *moral Government*, or of a Government by *Laws*, enforced by *Rewards* and *Punishments*. Essay
pag.
This Head I branch'd into several Particulars,
and took Notice;

That every *Subject* capable of such a Government must be a *real Agent*, i. e. must have a Principle of *moving it self*, or of *Self-determination*. He that is not in such a Sense an *Agent*, has nothing to do; he *does* do nothing, he *can* do nothing. Proper Action is above his Sphere, is beyond his Power; he is *passive* in all his Motions.

That the *immediate Principle* of Moral Agency, in every Subject, is the *Will*. All Morality depends on the Action of the *Will*. The *Action it self* is indeed *good* or *bad* by its *Agreement* or *Disagreement* with the *Rule* of Conscience; but the *Man* is *good* or *bad* by the *Will*.

That so far as the Will is *accountable*, it is Page
a *free Agent*, i. e. it either *has* or *had* a Power to *act* or *not to act*; or to *act this* or *that*. An accountable Creature, considered as *accountable*, I
is ever endowed with a Power, *undetermined* in its own Nature to the Choice either of *Good* or *Evil*, but yet that is *capable of determining it self* by chusing or refusing either.

That the Will is not so *free*, but that it I
may be *fixed* by its *own Act*. For as all *Liberty* is, in its original and primary Design, given for the *Benefit* of the Agent that enjoys it; so it is therefore given, that the *Agent it self* might *fix it*.

That the Way in which this *Fixedness* is introduced, or this Determination is made, is by an *Application* of the Mind (whether impartially or partially) to the *Light* or *Evidence* within its Reach. To say that the Will, tho' it cannot chuse *without* Evidence, yet it may chuse *against* all Evidence, *perceiv'd* and *weigh'd*, is, to me, all one as to say, Tho' a Ship cannot sail without Wind; yet it may
 18. fail against all Wind.

That the *Light* or *Evidence* applicable to the Mind, and adapted to direct and fix the *Will* of Man, is either that which points out the real and *best Pleasure* of our *animal Life*, and the *fittest Means* to obtain and prolong that Pleasure: Or, which discovers the proper, the compleat, and *lasting Happiness* of our *Spiritual Life*, with the *shortest* and *safest Way* that leads to it.

And *lastly* That Man may not (by a *Misapplication* or *Neglect* of the *Light* and *Evidence* that surrounds him) make for himself a *wrong Choice*, he has, considered as an accountable Creature, a Power to *suspend* the Act of his Choice from being determined *for* or *against* the Thing proposed, 'till he has examined, whether it be really of a Nature, in it self and Consequences, to make him happy or no. And that he might not be deceived, his kind Creator has took Care, that such Reasons for his *Duty*, and on the side of his *real Happiness*, shall ever be in his Reach, as shall vastly outweigh *in themselves* any thing he can possibly put in-
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to the opposite Scale against them. And God has given him a Power to put these Reasons under his own Eye, *all* as well as *some*, and *impartially* to observe the Difference upon the *whole*. The faithful Use of which Power is that which makes him a *good Agent*; and the Neglect or Abuse of it, in any Instance or Degree, is that which denominates him a *Sinful Agent*.

Hereupon I laid it down as an *undeniable Principle*, that as sure as Angels and Man in Innocency were under a *moral Government*, so sure it is that they were truly *free*: And shew'd that this *Freedom* of their Wills, in their *pure* and *created* State, and the *leaving* them (at least for a while) to the *Use* of this Freedom, were every way agreeable to the *Reason of Things*, and to the *Divine Goodness*. Which I rather enlarged upon, in Answer to a printed Discourse upon *Providence*, industriously handed about amongst my People. In which the Author (amongst many other unfavourable Expressions) has these Words, " Nor can I
 " conceive any other Reason of the Entrance
 " of Sin on the Angelick or humane Nature,
 " which were both created pure and upright,
 " but this, that God was pleased to with-hold
 " those supporting Influences (*viz. before they*
 " *were forfeited*) which were *essentially ne-*
 " *cessary* for their standing in their Purity and
 " Uprightness, upon which their Fall *necessa-*
 " *rily* ensued ". p. 7, 8. Thus making the
actual Fall of Angels and Man as *necessary* as
 their

their very *Existence* and *Being*; and so, to be no more their *real Fault*, that they were Sinners, than it was their *Fault* that they were Creatures.

But to do Mr. *Norman* Justice, what ever some of his Principles may seem to infer, he utterly renounces this blasphemous Tenet. So that, tho' some may be so weak as to argue from an *absolute Decree of Redemption*, to an *absolute Necessity* of our grand Parent's Fall; (without which Redemption wou'd be needless) yet you are quite of another Mind. As it is, " you say, no Scruple with you to make " the Decree of Redemption *absolute*, as well " as *eternal*; so you hope to shew, before you " have done, (*what every man besides your* " *self may, perhaps despair to see*) that this " may be maintained, without holding such " an *absolute* and *eternal Necessity* of *Adam's* " Fall, as wou'd destroy his Liberty, acquit " him from Guilt, and charge his Disobedience " upon his Maker ".

19. I suppose your Argument must be this, That *Adam* was a Match for the Almighty, and had a Power to reverse God's absolute Decrees. But, I say, what ever may be in the Premises, you abhor the Conclusion; and will have it, that tho' his Sin was eternally and infallibly certain to the Divine Mind, and in it self; (as you assert in p. 29, 30.) and tho' it was as necessary as the Accomplishment of the absolute Decree of our Redemption; yet you are so deep and so happy in your way of thinking, that

that you can, notwithstanding, see his Sin so intirely dependent upon the Liberty and Freedom of his own Will, as to be at the same time really *contingent*, or (as you there explain it) what *might not have been*.

My *Second Principle* is, That the *Grace of God* was never designed to *Supersede* or render useless a *Liberty of Choice* in *Actions strictly Spritual*, but rather to *restore* and *encourage* such a *Liberty*. This is the Subject of my second Letter, entitled, *The moral Agency of the accountable Creature in its lapsed and fallen State*. And then in answer to this Query, [Whether, besides the *Rule of Sanctification* in the Word of God; besides Christ's *Example* and *Pattern*; besides the *external Call* by Precepts and Prohibitions, by Promises and Threatnings, or by the Rewards of Virtue and the Punishments of Vice; and the *internal Call* of Conscience, with the *common Strivings* of the Spirit by providential Dispensations, or otherwise; whether, besides all these, there be any *further Help* yet needful to render such Assistances effectual to our Sanctification?] I say, in Answer to it I observe;

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That if such Means are afforded us, that we might be holy by the Assistance of them, and we be obliged to be holy by these Helps *alone*; then they must, its plain, be *sufficient* to make us holy. And the Fault must be ours, and wholly ours, if we be not Sanctified by them. But if they were given as only a *Part* of those Means which are necessary for our Sanctification,

tion, they were never designed *alone* for this End ; and it can be no Fault of Ours, that by these *alone* we are not Sanctified.

e 43. We must distinguish between *our own* and the *Spirit's* work in our Sanctification. *Our own* Part may be sufficient for us, in point of *Duty*, and in order to *entitle* us unto the *Spirit's* Help ; yet it may not be sufficient for our Sanctification without the Spirit's Aid. They may be both needful for our Holiness, tho' not both needful to be done by *us*.

What is necessary to *lead the way* to our Part must be done by the Spirit, before our Part can be *due*, can be *possible*. And they are, I conceive, such things as these ; A *Desire* to be compleatly and for ever *happy* ; *Capacities* to judge, upon an impartial Enquiry into what offers, what *Ends* are the best adapted or suited to make us *happy*, and what are the fittest *Means* to attain these *Ends* ; A *Principle* of Liberty to move this way or that way, to search here and there in Quest of true *Happiness*, and of the *Way* that leads to it ; and the *Preparation* of such Truths as are sufficient to direct us to our great *End*, and to point out the *way* thither ; *i. e.* such sacred Verities so clearly explained, so well attested, and so recommended by their intrinsic Excellency and promised Rewards, as are proper and sufficient to produce that dutiful Respect unto the Laws of Christ (when we do, as we *may*, duly apply them) which such means either can or ought *of themselves* to produce. This is a work needful to go before, in order to put the Sinner
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ner into a *new State of Trial* ; and may be call'd the Spirit's *previous Assistances*.

There is a Work of the Spirit, that is necessary to *attend* our Part, and to go along with it. Pag
Our Part now is to make a *virtuous use* of that Principle of Liberty we have received, that we may find out what is that *Good* which will make us *happy*, and what are those *Means* that are appointed to *secure* it ; not to shut our Eyes upon the Light, nor to take a passing and transient View only ; not to form our Judgments and our Resolutions rashly, nor yet to suspend and to defer them needlessly ; not to come to a practical Conclusion without a just Enquiry, nor yet to delay it, 'till the Evidence grows clouded, languid, and feeble again ; but to be diligent and impartial in our Searches, deliberate and timely in our Resolves. And *the Spirit's Part* is to maintain the Fa- 46.
 culties he hath thus created or restored ; to preserve the great Sanctifying Truths of the Gospel, with respect to their Clearness and Authority ; and to keep them not only in *Being*, but within the *Reach* of our *Enquiries*, that these sacred Records, with the Meaning, Certainty and Importance of them, may be visible unto those who are desirous to see them, and to be influenced by them. *Without these* previous and accompanying Aids of the Spirit we indeed *can do nothing* ; but then these are Aids that are *received* already ; and it is an Error and a Fault to say, that *with these* we can do Nothing. They are the Talents put
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into our Hands to trade with; and our *Neglect* or *Abuse* of them is that which makes us so *guilty*, and our *Destruction* so much *our own*.

There is a Work of the Spirit that *follows* after our Part, and is necessary, at least to compleat and finish our Sanctification, 1 *Thess.* v. 23. These assistances are various, and many times mysterious, suited, like the Recipe's of a Doctor, to the different Distempers of different Patients, or to the different States of the same Patient. And what chiefly concerns us here, is to be well perswaded, that with respect to these *further* Assistances, our Part (according to the establish'd Rule of the Gospel) is to lead the way; and that there is a sure and certain-Connection between our diligent Endeavours, and these crowning and finishing Aids, a Connection in point of *Promise* and *Right*, tho' not always in point of time, *Luke* xi. 9—13.

49. And *lastly*, I observed, That we must distinguish between the Help which is necessary to the *Being* of Sanctification, and that which is necessary to the *Well-being* of it. Was it possible for a Person by an early, vigorous, and constant *Application* of his Faculties to the *Gospel Remedy*, to attain to Holiness, without any *further* Assistances and Aids of the Spirit; (as it must be possible, if Man be obliged to be holy by Assistances already received alone;) yet this *further Help* may be needful to make our Sanctification more *easy*, more *speedy*, and more *compleat*. Therefore in Compassion to us, who have lost so many Opportunities and
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are so prone to tire and to divert unto things of less Necessity, the blessed Spirit, over and above the Helps already provided, meets the Sinner at his several Ordinances, and there by methods suitable to his own and our Natures, *facilitates* and *promotes* the Work. Lets and Hindrances are kindly removed; Divine and suitable Truths are brought sooner in our Way, and continued longer in our View. He finds means, at the best time, to bring to our Remembrance what we formerly knew, and to set revealed Truths in such a *Rangement* before us (whether by Instruments or without them) that we see in them as thus situated and related, more of their Divine Sense, Excellency, Importance and Attainableness, and of our Interest in them, than otherwise we shou'd do.

Thus, *Sir*, in complement to your better Judgment, *p.* 41. and for the Benefit of such as have not my Essay by them, or Leisure to peruse it, I have contracted in a narrow Compass the Substance of what was delivered there concerning *Liberty* and *Grace*: which you think it prudent entirely to pass by, only with this loose Reflection, That it "is not owing, Page 3
 " you assure me, to an Apprehension of my having considered them in a manner so very
 " clear and unexceptionable, as to leave no
 " room for the Animadversions of an Opponent." But, as I am not accountable for another Man's Apprehensions; so the Reader, I'm perswaded, will be so just, as to suspend his Censures, 'till you have made your Apprehensions

hensions *good*. What I would observe, in the mean time, is, How easy a matter it is for an Opponent to invent Objections, and especially if to carp and to object be his chief Design and Talent, and that in all cases, it is an easier thing to *find* a *Fault* than *mend* one. But why do you spare me then? Is it from a Tenderness to your Friend? Alas those that are most partial in your Favour must needs see a manifest Disposition running thro' your whole Letter to *quarrel* rather than to *argue*, and to *expose* the *Author* rather than his *Cause*. No; tis owing, you say, "to a want of Time for controversial Pursuits". Strange! And yet spend so much of that precious Time in Remarks (as some think) so foreign to the Point in Hand, to the no little Dissatisfaction of the most judicious Part of your Readers. But your chief Discouragement is "There is no Prospect of getting over the Difficulties attending those Arguments". How come you then to launch into the *present Controversy*? For, "after all, it must be allowed, you say, that the certain and eternal Previdence of contingent Events, is not easily to be accounted
e 31. "for". Most certainly so, especially if it shou'd appear, there are no such Events as are both future and contingent to be fore-known.

But, to bring this Head to a Conclusion, however we may differ in our Sentiments about the *Manner* of treating these Topicks of *Liberty* and *Grace*, we are, I take it, perfectly agreed about the *Substance*, viz. that there is a
real

real Consistency and sweet Harmony between them in the Affair of Man's Salvation, and Recovery by Christ. Witness that remarkable Passage you quote out of my Essay *with Approbation*, That we cannot work, 'till we have Power to work; "and we cannot chuse, 'till "we have Liberty; and we cannot be under a "Law, and Promises and Threatnings, if we "cannot chuse." This I had laid down as a certain and evident Principle in *p. 38.* where I was observing, That because we have all Notices *spiritual*, and the Arguments of Invitation to Obedience in Duties *Evangelical*, from *Revelation* and the Grace of God; therefore to this we owe the *Liberty* of our Wills, *i. e.* a Power to chuse in *spiritual* Things. *Grace and Truth* come by Jesus Christ, and *Liberty* of Will in those Respects come by him also; for *if the Son make us free, then are we free indeed.* And did we need human Authority to support this our Opinion; that taken out of Bp. Burnet's Exposition of the 39 Articles, is as full as any, and of as great a Weight with our contending Brethren. "Luther, says "he, went on long, as he at first set out, with "so little Disguise, that whereas *all Parties* "had always pretended, that they asserted the "*Freedom* of the *Will*, he plainly spoke out, "and said the Will was *not free*, but enslaved. "Yet before he died, he is reported to have "changed his Mind; for tho' he never owned "that, yet *Melancthon*, who had been of the "same Opinion, did *freely retract* it; for "which he was never blamed by *Luther* *."

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positi
p. 1*

As to that popular Cry, as if the Advocates of *moral Liberty* were Enemies to *free Grace*; I may appeal even to their own Consciences, who is it that exalts the *Riches* of Divine Grace most? They who plead for such Grace, [or gracious Assistances] as *may be had*, as is freely *promised*; or they who plead for such Grace as God hath left himself free to with-hold, after all that the Creature *can* do to procure it? Nay, which God is resolved notwithstanding to *deny* unto the *most*? who yet for the want of it shall not only be *deny'd Heaven*, but shall suffer the *Vengeance* of eternal Fire. Should they tell us, whilst we add to the *Riches*, we take from the *Freeness* of Divine Grace; would they not do well to consider? that if the *Grace* of God *ceases* to be *free*, when it is *possible* to be had, or is what the Creature *may procure*; does it not *cease* to be *Grace* or Favour, when it is *impossible* to be had? or, is what the Creature *cannot procure*? The *Grace* and Favour lies, I conceive, in the *Attainableness* of Saving Help; the *Freeness* of the *Grace*, in the *Undeservedness* of the Promise to those that seek it. Wretched Advocates they, for that blessed Gospel, which brings Peace on Earth and Good-will to'rds Men, and which we have a Commission to preach unto every Creature under Heaven! First to make the *Grace* of God of *absolute Necessity* for *all*; and then to make it *absolutely uncertain*, whether *all*, whether *any* upon the Face of the whole Earth are under a *Possibility* of having it! How do they torture the *constraining Love* of Christ, till they
have

have extracted all that's *lovely* out of it, and set it in such a disastrous Light, as to fright Men into Enmity and Dispair!

But to proceed to the *third* Principle laid down in my Preface; "That tho' all Things *future* be the undoubted Object of the Divine *Fore-knowledge*; yet the sinful free Actions of the Creature were not *always future*, what would certainly be, but only *possible* from Eternity, what *might* or *might not* be." This is the chief Subject of my three last Letters. And is it not as plain as Words can express? that the Dispute *here* is not, Whether God foreknows all that *will be*? You see, I allow it in the strongest Terms. And do my Adversaries contend for more? Can Mr. *Norman* himself have read my Essay, have read the first Leaf of it, and not stand convinc'd, That the only Dispute is, about what *will be*? I'm satisfied, you would, in any other Controversy, think your Opponent not worth your Notice, that should appear, either so *weak*, that he *could not*, or so *perverse*, that he *would not* understand a Point so plain as this. Yet, however it is, whether thro' Willfulness or Weakness, or the better to engage the Passions of the ignorant Multitude on your side, you have most unaccountably changed the true State of the Controversy. And your implicit Admirers (who judge by Title Pages, or only upon reading one side) are made to believe, It is a Dispute, not about what *will be*, but about God's *Foreknowledge* of what will be. Not whether
it

it was *true* from Eternity that all the Wicked-
 nesses in the World *would be*? but whether
 God *knew* from Eternity, that they *would be*?
 Not whether there be any *future Contingencies*
 to be foreseen? but whether God *foresees* them.
 As if we were both agreed, there *are* such E-
 vents as are both *future* and *contingent*; but
 that I deny'd or doubted of God's *Foreknow-*
ledge of them. And that this unfair Turn of
 the Controversy might be sure to strike every
 Eye, and wound the deeper, you entitle your
 Letter, Not *Contingent Events*, or *Future Con-*
tingencies vindicated; but God's *Foreknow-*
ledge of them vindicated. Whereas every one
 who hath actually done, what Mr. Norman
 ought to have done, and indeed professes that
 he has done; who has carefully read my Book,
 ge 29. and with a Mind open to Conviction, must (I
 think) needs see this, that the Point before us,
 is, Whether there be any Future Events, that
 are at the same time contingent; What will
 certainly be, and yet may never be? Or, whe-
 ther there be any contingent Events that are
 at the same time future; what may never be,
 and yet will certainly be? *Prove* as well as
affirm that there are such Things, and I'll yield
 you the whole Cause: It is a needless Trouble
 to *vindicate* God's *Foreknowledge* of them.
 And till this be done, you will pardon me, if I
 take the Freedom to tell you, you are only
 fighting with your own *Shadow*; and all your
 Arguments, tho' introduced with never such a
solemn Air, must be considered by the Judi-
 cious

ous and Impartial, as nothing better than a *pompous Trifle*. Let us come close to the Point.

It is *possible* to prevent what is contingent by your own Confession. But is it possible to prevent what will be? If not; then what will be, is not contingent: If it be possible, prove the Possibility, and I'm content. The Prescience or Foreknowledge of God hath really nothing to do in the Debate. And this pother about it can serve no End, but to cast a Mist before the Reader's Eyes, whilst something else, than what is properly in Dispute, is foisted in. Page

Should any deny a Circle to be a Square; how would it look for his Adversary to beg the Question, and to entitle his Answer, God's *Knowledge* of a Square-Circle *vindicated*? Or, in that Controversy with the Papist, Whether the Elements in the Lord's Supper *are* or *can be* transubstantiated? What would you think, if our Antagonists should first take it for granted, that they *are* or *may be* thus changed; and then make the Point only to be, whether God *knows* it? And hereupon harangue upon the Incomprehensibleness or Infinity of the Divine Knowledge. Let them put but the Question fair, whether Bread *is* or *can be* Bread and yet Flesh? Whether Wine *is* or *can be* Wine and yet Blood? And the common Reason of Mankind would easily discern the Absurdity, and readily answer, no, no. But now let a Sophister alter the State of the Question, and make

it a Dispute, not whether the Thing *be* so, or is *possible* to be so? But whether God *knows* it? In this Case a weak and devout Mind might hesitate a while; lest to answer in the Negative, and to say, God doth *not know* that they *are*, or that they *can be* thus changed should be call'd a Denying a *Divine Attribute*, or the *Omni-science* of God. But the Discerning and Judicious easily see thro' the Imposture; and would at once allow, that whatever *is*, God *knows* that it *is*; and what ever is *possible*, he *knows* to be possible. And would observe, that the real Debate is, Whether such a Transubstantiation as the Papists contend for, be either *in fact true* or *possible* to be true? that is, Whether for Bread to be Flesh and yet Bread, is not all one as to be Bread and not Bread, Flesh and not Flesh? Or, whether for Wine to be Blood and yet Wine, be not all one as to be Wine and not Wine, Blood and not Blood? So here, the Reader should carefully take Notice, that the Question is not at all, whether God *fore-knows* future Contingencies, if any Contingencies be future? But the real Enquiry is, whether any *Contingencies* are *future*, what will be? or, only possible, what may or may not be? Or thus, whether for an Event to be contingent, and yet future, be not the same as to be contingent and not contingent; future and not future.

This Change of the Question is an old *Sophism*, and what meets with a just Reproof in Mr. *Watt's* Treatise of Logick. “ Disputers, says
“ he,

“ he, when they grow warm, are ready to run
 “ into this Fallacy : They dress up the Opi-
 “ nion of their Adversary as they please, and
 “ ascribe Sentiments to him, which he doth not
 “ acknowledge; and when they have with a
 “ great deal of Pomp attack’d and confounded
 “ these Images of Straw of their own making,
 “ they triumph over their Adversary, as though
 “ they had utterly confuted his Opinion. ’Tis
 “ a Fallacy of the same kind, he goes on, which
 “ a Disputant is guilty of when he finds that
 “ his Adversary is too hard for him, and that
 “ he cannot fairly prove the Question first pro-
 “ pos’d, he then with Slynels and Subtlety
 “ turns the Discourse aside to some other kin-
 “ dred Point which he can prove, and exults
 “ in that new Argument wherein his Opponent
 “ never contradicted him. * ”

Whether, Sir, you have given any Occasion for my pointing out these Passages, “ is submitted, (to use your own Phrase) “ to the World and to your self.” Tho’ I find it the more difficult to excuse you here, not only because there is not a single Phrase or Word (as I remember) in my whole *Essay*, that looks this way, as if I doubted of God’s *Foreknowledge* of what *will be*, when it is *true* that it *will be*; or, of his Foreknowledge of Future Contingencies, if there be such Contingencies : But I every where speak of the *Knowledge* and *Foreknowledge* of God in as *ample, august, and venerable* Terms, as you your self *have* done. Nay, it is one of those

Page

C 2

. Things

* Vid. *His Treatise of Logick in 12mo*, p. 470, 471.

Things, which (as you complain) “ I thought
 41. “ it most proper to say so often over again, on-
 “ ly with some Variation in Language,” that
 the meanest Capacity and the most partial Rea-
 der might be utterly inexcusable, if they mis-
 represented me in this Respect: and that thus
 by keeping my own and the Reader’s Eye so
 steadily fixed on the precise Point in Dispute, I
 might neither wander from it my self, nor suf-
 fer others to wander from it, or substitute any
 thing else in its Room. You, Sir, have made
 it necessary, and must bear with me, if I tran-
 scribe such Passages as plead my Innocency.

Don’t I tell the Reader in my three Letters?
 9. “ *All things* that are *knowable* God doth *know*;
 “ all things that are *foreknowable*, God doth
 “ *foreknow*.” Don’t I complain in my Appen-
 dix? “ I am surpriz’d that any should so far
 “ mistake my Notion, as to apprehend I deny
 “ God’s *Omniscience* or *Foreknowledge*. It ne-
 “ ver was any doubt with me, whether God’s
 “ *Omniscience* does not take in the *whole Com-*
 “ *pass* of Truth; or whether the Divine *Fore-*
 “ *knowledge* does not extend unto *all future*
 “ *Truths*. So in the Introduction to my *Essay*
 I observe; “ That God ever knew all that was
 “ ever true, I unfeignedly believe. All *eter-*
 “ *nal Truths*, I acknowledge, God knew to be
 “ true *from Eternity*: But such things as are
 “ only true *in time*, cannot, I think, be known
 “ to be true *before all Time*. — For what
 “ Perfection in Knowledge can it be, to *know* a
 “ Thing to be true, before it is true? No more
 “ than

“ than it is to know a Thing to be *past*, while
 “ it is *present*, ” Again, what can be more ^{Page}
full and to the purpose than that in the 95th
 Page ? Where I observe, “ Whatever is *possible*
 “ God *knows* to be *possible* ; whatever is *past*,
 “ God *knows* to be *past* ; whatever is *present*,
 “ he *knows* to be *present* ; whatever is *future*
 “ or *to come*, he *knows* to be *future* or *to come* ;
 “ whatever is *certain*, or that cannot be other-
 “ wise, he *knows* to be *certain*, or that it can-
 “ not be otherwise ; and whatever is *really un-*
 “ *certain* , or truly contingent, he *knows* to be
 “ *really uncertain*, or truly contingent, *viz.*
 “ that it *may be*, or *may not be* ; or that it
 “ may be *thus* or *thus*. ” So, don’t I remon-
 strate against your State of the Controversy in
 these Words ? “ Give me leave, Sir ; the Ques-
 “ tion before us is not, whether God has a
 “ *Foreknowledge* of *all that is future* ? Nor,
 “ whether the *absolute Predictions* upon Divine
 “ Record be not an *Evidence* of it ? I grant
 “ them *both*. But the Dispute is, whether a-
 “ ny thing that is *future*, be at the same time
 “ *contingent* ? What is future, [will] be ;
 what is really contingent, [only may] be.
 “ Now can an Action be known, both that it
 “ *will be*, and that it *only may be* at the same
 “ time ? Can Predictions prove that things
 “ which *differ* are yet the *same* ? No more
 “ than they can prove [F] to be [C] or
 “ [2] to be [3] ” Now do you in your
 Letter so much as attempt to shew, either that
 my *Notion* of *Contingencies* is *wrong*, or my
Reason-

Reasoning fallacious and weak? So p. 107.
 " I agree with you, that when ever it is *true*,
 " that any thing *shall come to pass*, God
 " *knows* it to be true. And I suppose you will
 " not maintain, that he knows it to be true be-
 " fore it is true. "

If the Reader would have yet further Evidence of my Innocency in this Point, let him turn to the following Pages, p, 93, 95, 96, 98, 99, 104, where he will find several Passages as strong to this Purpose as any already quoted,

Such a cloud of Witnesses have I to vindicate my self from the Reproaches, that have been unrighteously cast upon me on this Score, as if I had deny'd a *Divine Attribute*, and particularly the *Omniscience* or *Foreknowledge* of God. I wish *some* of my Censurers cou'd fairly say *half* as much to clear themselves of a much *heavier Charge*; Their *detracting* from, (not to say their utter *Subversion* of) even *more* than *one* of the Divine Attributes, and such too in which we have a more special Concern, whether considered as *Creatures* or *Christians*; I mean the *Divine Holiness, Justice, Goodness* and *Truth*.

My *fourth* Principle was this, " That such
 " *Prophecies* as are referable to the *Actions* of
 " *moral Agents*, are either *only conditional*, ac-
 " cording to the great Standard laid down by
 " God himself with respect to the Prediction of
 " National Judgments and Mercies, *Jeremiah*
 " xviii. 7. 8, 9, 10. Or, if the *Prediction* of such
 " *Actions* be *absolute* and peremptory, the *Ac-*
 " *tions*

“ *tions themselves* are no longer *free*, what *may*
 “ or *may not* be, but are *absolutely determined*
 “ now, and *must be*.”

But you seem to be of a very different Opinion, and to hold, That the *Actions* of *moral Agents* may be *absolutely foretold* and yet *free*; Nay, may be still *contingent* and what *may not be*, tho' they be absolutely determined now, and *must be*. This marvelous Paradox you favour us with in the 22d, 23d, and 24th Pages of your Book. There you tell us, That “ *Ju-*
 “ *das* was under *no Necessity* of betraying
 “ Christ, nor were the *Jews* compell'd to cru-
 “ cify him; that they acted *freely* in bringing
 “ about these Events, and that the Events
 “ themselves *must* belong to the Class of *Con-*
 “ *tingencies*; ” that is, of things that might Page
 not be: And yet in the same Breath you tell
 us also, These very Events, among others,
 were *absolutely foretold*, and “ that it was *ne-*
 “ *cessary* they should exactly correspond with
 “ their Predictions; ” and, that “ if it had been
 “ *possible* for Things thus predicted *not* to have
 “ proved *true*, you cannot see that the Prophe-
 “ cies themselves would have been of any Sig-
 “ nification.” Now this, I humbly conceive, is ^{23,}
 to be at Variance with your self; to *say* and
unsay; to affirm that *Judas* and the *Jews*
were and *were not* under a *Necessity* of offen-
 ding. What is it, but to make the same E-
 vents *contingent* and *not contingent*; *necessary*,
 and *not necessary*; And to insinuate, that this
 was all their Crime, they *would not* forbear to
 do;

do; what it was really *impossible* they *shou'd* not do? I appeal to the unbias'd Judgement of every Reader, learned or unlearned; whether if your Words have any Meaning at all, this be not the evident and plain Meaning of them. Thus your Cittadel, your strongest Hold is lost at once, and all your towering Hopes built upon the Foundation of absolute Prophecies fall flat to the Ground, never to rise more. You at once grant me all I contend for upon this Head. So that what I undertook to prove, and that you allowed me, would be an *effectual Answer* to your Argument from Prophecies; *could I make it out*, you have here kindly done to my Hand: *viz.* "That if these *sinful* Events were *absolutely foretold*; they were not at the time of such Prophecies *most contingent*: Or, if they were even then of the Number of such Actions as were *most contingent*; they were only *conditionally foretold*, "or prophetic Threatnings only." And whether the *Solution* I there give of the Difficulty from Prophecies, looks not with a much greater Respect upon all the *moral Perfections* of God than your own *Hypothesis*; and be not infinitely more consistent with the real *Liberty* of the Creature, (without which all Religion and Virtue are gone) I durst submit to your own inmost and impartial Thoughts to decide.

The nameless Author of a certain Pamphlet entitled, *The Divine Prescience of free contingent Events vindicated*, &c. dashes upon the same Rock. After a great deal of Pains to prove

prove that some Events are *future* and *contingent* both; what will be, and yet may never be; And after an Appeal to *Prophecies*, amongst other Arguments, for the Support of this chimerical Notion; he frankly acknowledges, *we know* of no such Events as are both *future* and *contingent*. "It is true, says he, "we do not certainly know that any thing *will be*, but what we certainly know *must be*, "and *cannot but be*." So that the very Pre-Page
 dictions by which we certainly know, (according to this Gentleman) that *free contingent* Events *will be*, do certainly prove that the same Events *must be*, and *cannot but be*, *i. e.* that they are neither *free* nor *contingent*. But why can't we certainly know it? I may defy him to assign any substantial Reason but this; because what *will be*, *must be* and *cannot but be*. The Ideas destroy each other. While we are raising one Part of the Building, the other tumbles down. The very Arguments by which we make out the *Futurity* of an Event, destroy it's *Contingency*, and shew that it *must be*; and on the other hand, the Arguments we urge to support the *Contingency* of an Event, destroy it's *Futurity*, and prove that it *only may be*.

"The Bounds to which you confined "your self, would not, it seems, suffer you to "enter into the *Nature* of Prophecies in *General*," And yet till this be done, our Discourses upon Prophecies in *Particular* will, I fear, be very confused and uncertain. I have therefore tryed at least to state and to adjust this
 D Matter

Matter in my Essay, from p. 126, to 143, so far as they relate to *moral* and *penal* Evils. My designed Brevity in this introductory Letter will not allow me here to contract the *Solutions* and *Distinctions* laid down in those Pages, without an Injury to their Perspicuity and Force. But to follow you in your own Method;

As to the Words of *David*, Psal. 41. 9. *Mine own familiar Friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my Bread, did lift up his heel against me.* That they are *applied* by *Christ* himself unto *Judas*, and that *Christ* mentions them as *fulfilled* in him, I readily own, John xiii. 18. But then the Question is, whether those Words wou'd not have been *true*, unless they had been *fulfilled* in *Judas*? Or, whether *David* wou'd have been a *false Prophet*, or the blessed *Jesus* an *Impostor*, if *Judas* had not *perfidiously* betrayed him? The Passage you your self acknowledge, "*might be literally*" meant of another Person, as of *Achitophel*, "or of some other treacherous Courtier." Then for any thing in the Words themselves, they *might have been true*, had *Judas* never been or had he been *faithfull to his Lord*. So that the only Difficulty is, in *what Sense* they are said to be *fulfilled* in *Judas*? You think, "in "as proper a Sense, as if they had no Regard to any other Event:" *i. e.* They would have been strictly false, if *Judas* had not proved a Traitor; and so *Christ* would have wanted one of the *necessary* Credentials of his true Messiahship. But is not this to be a little at Variance with your self again? For how then

then *could* they be *literally meant* of any other Person? I might add also; if *one Part* of the Text must belong unto *Judas*, and that in as proper a Sense as if it had no Regard to any other Event, *the other* must by consequence belong unto *Christ*, and in as proper a Sense too. Which yet can no more be true, than that our Saviour had *sinned* against the Lord, had an *evil Disease* cleaving to him, and lay upon a *Bed of languishing*. All which is there spoken of the Person, whose familiar Friend, in whom he trusted, lifted up his heel against him, v. 4, 8. *I said, Lord, be mercifull unto me, heal my Soul, for I have sinned against thee. An evil Disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: And now that he lieth, he shall rise no more.* And then it follows, *yea, mine own familiar Friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my Bread, hath lift up his heel against me.* Therefore when any Passages in the Old Testament, as this before us, are in their *primary* Sense *historical*, and can't by any Marks *inherent in themselves* be known to be *prophetical*, much leis to be a Prophecy concerning our Saviour, farther than they are adapted *by* and *to* himself in the New Testament for that purpose: As they in this Case derive all their Authority from him alone, so they can give no Authority to his Mission or Doctrine, more than they had before: And therefore are such Passages, in which the Cause of Christianity has but little concern, let them be taken in a *literal* or an *allusive* Sense. See *Pool's* Annotations on the Title of this Psalm.

Not to mention, that if *Judas* his *Perfidiousness* be *absolutely predicted* here, then (since *absolute Predictions* are *necessary* by your own Confession) *Judas* must be *under a Necessity* of being *perfidious*.

But you'll say, if this your Account of our Saviour's Words be *inconsistent* with it self, pray let us have an Exposition of them that is consistent. Therefore, with Submission to your better Judgment, I see no hurt, should we suppose the Case to be thus: Our Blessed Lord resolves to suffer the lurking, but observed Wickedness of *Judas* to break out in such an Instance of Ingratitude and Perfidiousness, against himself, the rather that what was *historically true* of *David*, might be *verified* in the Son of *David*. *If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them; I speak not of you all,* (i. e. ye will not all be so happy as to do them) *I know whom I have chosen.* But (i. e. I will suffer it to be so) *that the Scripture may be fulfilled* (i. e. that what the Scripture relates *historically* of *David*, may again be *exemplified* in *David's* Son,) *He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel against me.* And the Context seems much to favour this Interpretation. Now I tell you, (NOT DAVID told you) *before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe, that I am he,* ver. 19. Here Christ builds his Argument, *not* upon the *Authority* of *David's Prediction*, but upon the *Accomplishment* of his *own*. And therefore it is delivered by Christ and received by his Disciples, as an Event both

new and unexpected, ver. 21, 22. *When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in Spirit, and testified and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, (NOT DAVID) that one of you shall betray me.* Then the Disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. And indeed it is highly improbable that the *Treachery* and *Perdition* of Judas, should be *absolutely certain* before his *Existence*; and be by an infallible and *absolute Prediction* made as *necessary*, as the *Sacrifice* of the *Lamb of God* and our *Salvation* by him, 'till by an *incurable Avarice* and *Cruelty* of his own procuring, he had really made them so. Besides, where's the *Contingency* of Judas his Sin, if the Holy Ghost must have been in an *Error*, and Christ have been a *Deceiver*, if he had not thus sinned? So that as to what you say, "There are a Number of express Prophecies (the fulfilling of which depended upon the Behaviour of Men acting freely) of whose punctual Accomplishment we have undoubted Assurance; and they oblige you to believe such a Prescience as you defend and I oppose." Consider, Sir, is every *express* Prophecy an *absolute* one? Remember the Case of *Nineveh*. Or, is there no Difference between God's *making use* of our *free Agency* to bring about the thing foretold, and a Prophecy's *depending* upon *such Agency* for its Accomplishment; *Jacob's Lie* was a *Means* to obtain the promised Blessing; but did the promised Blessing *depend* upon his *Lie*? Produce but one *absolute Prophecy* of this kind, and it is eno';

I'll yield the Point. I mean, a Prophecy that was not only *conditionally*, but *absolutely* certain at the Time of the Prophecy; and yet so depended upon the Behaviour of Men *acting freely*, that it *could not* have been *accomplished* without it; *i. e.* shew me but *one Event*, which was *absolutely sure* to be, and yet *could not have been* without such *free Actions* of the Creature, which upon the whole *might never have been*, and I own my self confuted. But to proceed:

My *fifth* Principle was this, "That the Divine Mind *knows* no more of the Actions and Fates of an *unmade* World, than the Divine *Will* has decreed concerning them." Here you differ from me, and chuse to conceive of the Creature's *Sin* and *Misery* as all eternally objected to the Divine *Understanding*, not only as *possible*, but as *future*; not only as what *may be*, but as what *will be*, and this too *without a Decree*. You ask me therefore, "Where is the *Necessity* of asserting an eternal Decree of Sin, tho' an eternal Foreknowledge be *contended for*?" And I ask again, where is the *Necessity* of asserting the eternal Foreknowledge of Sin, where an eternal Decree is *disclaimed*? Give me one solid Argument from *Reason*, or a plain *Scripture Testimony* to support your Hypothesis, and I have done. You know what that great Man, Mr. *Clarkson*, remarks about the Rise of your favourite Notion. "It was, he says, an Invention of the Jesuits the last Age [*this of an eternal Foreknowledge without an eternal Decree*] to make good their
" Doctrine

“ Doctrine of Free-will and Moral Grace, and
 “ to avoid the supposed Inconveniencies of the
 “ opposite Doctrine. But a very imprudent
 “ and unhappy Device it was, says he, since it
 “ involves them in those very Absurdities,
 “ which it was devised to avoid *”. And I
 take his Observation to be just: For what God
infallibly foreknows, must, sure, be *infallibly*
true. Nor can you or I, or all the World hin-
 der that from *being true*, which is *infallibly*
true. So that the *Foreknowledge* of God *im-*
plies a *Necessity* somewhere, as much as a *De-*
cree, whether it be the *Cause* of it or no. And
 in this Particular I am so happy, as to have Mr.
Norman himself, and the famous Bp. *Tillotson*,
 (from whom you quote the Passage) *both* on
 my Side, *viz.* That what God foreknows, *must*
infallibly be; for those are your very Words. Page
 Now is that any longer *contingent* or *free*,
 which not only *will be*, but *must be*, *must in-*
fallibly be? Yet this infallible Necessity (you
 allow) the bare Foreknowledge of an Event
supposes. So that the only Question is, to what
 must this *Necessity* be ascribed? Not to the *fu-*
ture Creature: For that which as yet *never*
was, can never be the *Cause* of that which
ever was. If it be *true* that the Creature’s Sin
 and Misery *will be*, there must be some *Cause*
 of this *Truth*: And if the *Truth* be *eternal* (as
 you maintain) the *Cause* of this Truth cannot
 be *in time*; unless the Effect can exist *before*,
 and so *without* its Cause. I say, there must be
 some

* Vid. *His Discourse of Free Grace*, p. 114.

some *Cause* of this Truth, unless you reduce Things to that fatal Necessity, that you would be thought to guard against. So that what I have said in my Essay upon this Head, remains, I conceive, in its *full Strength*, p. 104, 108, 109. where I grant the Difference betwixt these two Acts in God, that of the *Understanding*, and that of the *Will*: That the *former* only *supposes* the Object, the *latter* doth also *produce* it. But then as the *Object* which the Understanding *supposes*, must either be *produced*, or be in its *own Nature necessary*; it will follow, that this Proposition, *that Sin will be*, considered as an *eternal Truth*, must be a Truth that is *necessary* in its *own Nature*, or *produced* and made so by the *Divine Will*. For *without the Decree* nothing would have been *future*, nor *known* as such. This (I suppose) all will allow. Then certainly the *bare Decree* can make *nothing more* to be *future*, than what is *contained* in it. Its *eternal Futurity* can never arise from the *meer Act* of the *unmade* Creature, no more than *something* can arise from *nothing*. For the Creature before all Worlds (as has been observed) was *nothing* but a *Decree*, or save what it was *in and by* the Decree; and therefore in this State could give *Certainty* to nothing *further* than the *Decree did go*. So that, as to what you observe, "That bare Knowledge is
 " no more the *Cause* of any Event, which be-
 " cause it is known, must infallibly be, than
 " your seeing a Man run, is the Cause of your
 " running, which because you do see it, is in-
 " fallibly

“fallibly so.” It is, with Submission, no better than trifling with your Reader. Here according to your own Supposition, the *Contingency* in both Cases is gone: For if what God foresees *must be*; it can no longer be true, that it *may not be*: And if what you actually see, be *infallibly so*; he must be infallibly wrong, who thinks it still *in his Power* to make it *not so*. Thus you first give up the Contingency of *fore-known Events*, and then vindicate God’s *Fore-knowledge* of their Contingency. Besides, the Question is not, Whether *Knowledge* it self be the *Cause* of an Event? But, whether in the Controversy before us, it does not *imply* that the *Being* who knows it, is the *Cause*? That God may know, the *existing* Creature *will* act wrong, and yet the *Creature* be the *only culpable Cause* of it, none denies. But the Dispute is, whether it will equally hold, with regard to the Knowledge of those Things, which as yet are *nothing*, neither *in themselves*, nor in *their Causes*, but what they are in the *Idea* and *Purpose* of him that knows them? An *old Answer* may do for an *old Objection* ’till you shew its Insufficiency: Therefore I beg leave to observe again, “There is a wide Difference
 “between a *Knowledge* grounded upon an *Ob-*
 “*ject* made *already*, and by *an other*, and a
 “*Knowledge* drawn from an *Object* I *intend*
 “to make *my self*. The *former*, it’s granted,
 “implies no *Causality* in *me* of what I *know*;
 “the *latter*, I conceive, *does*. For God to
 “*foreknow*, the Creature he is *about* to make,
 E “(if

(if it be made according to his own Model)
 “ not only *may*, but *will* sin, implies, that he
 “ *designs* to make it such a Creature, as not
 “ only *may*, but *shall* sin, and that either it was
 “ the *Will* of God that it *should* sin, or *out of*
 “ *his Power* to prevent its sinning.” And if
 Authorities were of any Weight in such a Point,
 you well know, I have Bp. *Davenant*, Mr.
Charnock, Dr. *Edwards*, Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Clark-*
son, and every Advocate for *Calvinism* on my
 Side. I have mentioned a few of their Reasons
 in my Essay; *some* of which, I am sure, did
 well deserve your Consideration; especially
 that of a nameless Author. His Words shall
 conclude this Head. “ It is self-evident, says
 “ he, that whatever is the Object of an *absolute*,
 “ *infallible* Foreknowledge, must be somewhat
 “ that is *fixed* and *determined*. But whatever
 “ Event is *determined to be*, must plainly either
 “ be determined in it’s *own Nature*, or else it
 “ must be determined by virtue of some *immuta-*
 “ *ble Order* of things, *independent on the Deity*,
 “ or lastly, it must be so determined by some
 “ *particular, divine Decree*. That it cannot
 “ be so in it’s *own Nature* is clear: For nothing
 “ is more manifest than that every *particular E-*
 “ *vent*, in *it self* considered, is *absolutely indis-*
 “ *ferent*, either to *be* or *not be*. That it can-
 “ not be thus determined by virtue of any *im-*
 “ *mutable, independent Order* of Things is a
 “ like clear: For it is not only inconceivable,
 “ how such an *immutable Order* should establish
 “ it self *without the Deity*; but this would
 “ render

“ render the Creator of the World (like the
 “ *Jupiter* of the *Stoicks*, and other Pagans) a
 “ very insignificant Being, incapable of any *free*
 “ Action, and unable to foreknow any thing
 “ without consulting the mysterious *Book of*
 “ *Fate*. It therefore remains, that as nothing
 “ could be sufficient *eternally* to determine the
 “ *Existence* of any *particular Event*, but some
 “ *eternal, absolute Decree* of that sovereign
 “ Will, on which all Things depend; so no-
 “ thing less than such *eternal Decrees* could be
 “ a sufficient Foundation (concludes that learn-
 “ ed Author) of such *eternal, universal, infal-*
 “ *lible* Foreknowledge, as is usually attributed
 “ to the Deity.”

We are now come to my *sixth* and last *Prin-*
ciple; which was, “ That the *actual Fall* of
 “ Angels and Men, with all the *sinful* and *mise-*
 “ *erable Effects* of their *Fall*, was no *Object* of
 “ God’s *eternal* and *decretive Will*.” The
 Point, you know, is particularly discuss’d in my
 first Book, entitled, *The Greatness of Divine*
Love vindicated, &c. What I have further
 offered upon this Head, is to be found chiefly
 in the *fourth* Letter of my *Essay*. We have no
 immediate Concern with Mr. Norman here.
 You would be thought to be intirely with me
 in this Article; and seem to have no Friendship
 at all for *universal* Decrees: Nay, it is matter
 of Rejoicing to you, “ That *Antinomianism*, if
 “ you may judge according to your little Ac-
 “ quaintance with Men and Things, is very far
 “ from being the *prevailing System* at present. Page 4

“ And if it had as many Advocates as for-
 “ merly, you could, *you presume*, make as
 “ successful a Stand against it, and plead
 “ for *Prescience* at the same time as I can
 “ upon my Principles.” It is boldly said,
 but whether your Success has been equal to
 such Boastings, let the Reader judge. This
 is certain, *your Prescience* is as inconsistent
 with *real Liberty* as *their Decrees*. The
Foreknowledge you contend for, is (by your
 own Confession) *certain* and *infallible* ; and
 “ in Consequence of this you own too, that what
 “ God foreknew before all Worlds wou’d be,
 “ *wou’d come to pass* in time as he foreknew it,
 ge 29. “ and that *certainly* and *infallibly*.” And as
 if this was not enough, you go a Step farther,
 and assure us, that it “ *must infallibly be*.”
 3. Now does such a *Prescience* leave any more *Li-*
*ber*ty to *this* or *that*, than the most *absolute De-*
*cre*e whatsoever? You and they affect the Name
 still , it’s true, but the *Thing* it self is gone.
 The *Calvinists* are so ingenuous as to own the
 Consequence ; “ If the Will, says Mr. *Clarkson*,
 “ *might* or *cou’d* incline otherwise than God
 “ foresaw, his *Foreknowledge* wou’d not be *in-*
 “ *fallible* : For that excludes not only *actual*
 “ *Error*, but a *Possibility* of it. If then, adds
 “ he, it be true from Eternity, that the Will
 “ *must* incline this *one Way*, it is not *indifferent* :
 “ to incline *that way* or *another* ; And so it’s
 “ *Indifferency*, it’s *Freedom* from a *Necessity* to
 “ incline but *this one Way*, is gone by their
 “ own Principles ;” meaning Gentlemen of your
 Senti-

Sentiments. And then he concludes, " They
 " must either grant, that the *Liberty* of Man's
 " *Will* is consistent with a *Necessity* of inclining
 " *one Way*, and not another, or yeild that their
 " own Doctrine destroys it's *Liberty*;" And in-
 deed you your self scruple not to allow me in
so many Words, that a Foreknowledge of an E-
 vent supposes a *Necessity* of the Thing fore-
 known: But then you call it an *hypothetical*
Necessity, " which (you pretend) is altogether
 " consistent with the *Contingency* of an Event,
 and with the Creature's *Liberty*." Whereas *all* Pag
Necessity, whether *absolute* or *hypothetical*, is
 still *Necessity*. And what is *really necessary*,
 cannot be *really contingent*, or *really free*; un-
 less what is *necessary*, *may not be*. In this Syl-
 logism [If God foreknows that Sin *will be*, it
 is *necessary* that Sin *shou'd be*. But God fore-
 knows that Sin *will be*. Therefore it is *neces-*
sary that Sin *shou'd be*.] Tho' the Form of it
 be *hypothetical* or *conditional*, yet it is as *con-*
clusive, as if it had been *categorical* and *abso-*
lute. And as long as the Argument runs from
 a *Position* of the *Antecedent*, to the *Position* of
 the *Consequent*, the Inference is *just* and *solid*,
viz: That it is *necessary* that Sin *shou'd be*.
 Here again you have given up the Point, and
 your *future Contingencies* are no better than
necessary Contingencies, or *contingent Necessities*.
 And now (to use your own Words with a lit-
 tle Variation) *I cannot help expressing my Fear,*
that you have greatly weaken'd (if not sapp'd)
 the

* Vid. His Discourse of Grace, p. 119.

the very Foundation of all Religion, by taking away the *real Liberty* of the accountable Creature. The *Antinomians*, (to say nothing of " the *Fatalists* here) I believe, are of that " Mind, and perhaps, for that reason very " much applaud your Performance, which, I " presume, I may say I am sorry for, without " being thought to envy you any Part of your
 26, " valuable Reputation." And what you tell me, I don't stick at *asserting*, you don't stick at *demonstrating* also. " That an *eternal Fore-* " *knowledge* of Sin as what *will be*, has all the " Absurdities of an *eternal Decree* of Sin, and " stains the *moral Perfections* of God as much." And if there be nothing *shocking* in the *Absurdities themselves* to a *serious Reader*, I can't imagine, why the *Manner of my expressing them* shou'd be esteem'd so: Sure, I am, I was very serious when I mention'd them. I'll transcribe the chief Passages, and then leave it to your second Thoughts, whether you had not been kinder to your self and your Friends, had you expos'd the Weakness of my Charge instead of complaining of its Severity. " What an horrid " Idea of the holiest and best of Beings, I tell " my Reader, must it give us, to suppose, that " all the Atheism and Infidelity; all the Superstitions and Idolatries; all the Blasphemies, Oaths, and Curses; all the Prophane- " tion of sacred Things and sacred Time; all " the Rebellions of Subjects against their Sovereigns, and the Disobedience of Children against their Parents; all the inhuman Cruel-
 " ties

“ ties, deadly Rage, and bloody Murders ; all
 “ the Wantonness and Debaucheries, the filthy
 “ Speeches and lewd Actions, the Fornications,
 “ Adulteries, Incests and Sodomies ; all the
 “ Coufenance, Oppressions, Thefts and Robbe-
 “ ries ; all the Lies and Slanders, false Wit-
 “ nesses and Perjuries ; all the Lustings, Ima-
 “ ginations and Thoughts of the Heart, which
 “ are evil and only evil ; that these were all
 “ certain and fixed Things before all Worlds ;
 “ that both the actual Fall of Angels and
 “ Men with all the Wickednesses and Abo-
 “ minations that have appeared in the World
 “ since, or that shall break forth in all the
 “ Ages to come, were, every one of them,
 “ with all their several heightening Aggrava-
 “ tions, absolutely and unalterably fixed, not
 “ by the Creature’s *free Choice*, but *before its*
 “ *Existence* ; fixed either by God’s unchange-
 “ able Decree, or in his infallible Foreknow-
 “ ledge, as firm and inflexible as any Decree
 “ whatsoever.”—— And yet this is no more
 than what the Principles themselves really
 imply ; and what some that hold them have
 been so ingenuous as to acknowledge. “ *It is*
 “ *(says Dr. Edwards) demonstrable from hence,*
 “ *that God foreknows all things, and particu-*
 “ *larly the COMMISSION of all the Sins of*
 “ *the World from Eternity, because they were*
 “ *pre-ordained by him.* Much to the same Sense
 “ is that Passage of Bp. Davenant’s out of St.
 “ *Austin*, which he quotes as his own Sense al-
 “ so. *If a Man should speak to his Auditors to*
 “ *this*

“ *this Purpose, whether ye run or sleep, whe-*
 “ *ther ye receive the Word into your Hearts*
 “ *or reject it, yet in the Conclusion ye shall ALL*
 “ *be such as God, who is INVINCIBLE has*
 “ *DECREED ye SHOULD BE, as God who*
 “ *is INFALLIBLE, FORESAW ye WOULD*
 “ *BE. This (adds he) is a MOST TRUE Doc-*
 “ *trine. But because in the manner of pro-*
 “ *pounding it, it seemeth to separate the End*
 “ *from the Means, it is so most true, that with-*
 “ *al, says he, it is MOST WICKED, UNSEA-*
 “ *SONABLE, INCONVENIENT; not that*
 “ *the Saying is FALSE, but because it is not*
 “ *wholesomely applied to human Infirmary.” And*
 yet this very *Misapplication* of the Doctrine,
 tho’ most wicked, &c. must (if I take him
 right) be, whenever it happens, as much fix-
 ed by God’s *invincible Decree*, or in his *in-*
fallible Foreknowledge, as the very Doctrine
 it self, p. 66, 68.

“ Yet, you think, I should have been less
 “ forward in charging Consequences upon their
 7. “ Theology, which they have always detested.”
 Why so? Since if the Consequences be just
 and fair, their Theology is justly chargeable
 with them; tho’ the Theologist, I own, ought
 to be acquitted, while he appears Sincerely to
 detest them. But you’ll reply, that “ those
 “ Divines who admit the Notion of Decrees
 “ into their System, have as expressly guarded
 “ against making God the *Author of Sin*, as
 “ any other Writers ”. They have guard-
 ed against the *Phrase* indeed, but not against
 the

the *Thing*. He that makes it *necessary* to Sin, is as much the *Sinner* (with Reverence be it spoken) as he who *Submits* to that *Necessity*. And that you may see it is not my single Opinion only, give me leave to shut up this Head with a Quotation out of a certain Pamphlet, wrote by a *nameless Author* of *your own Opinion*, against my Essay. His Words are these, " This Notion of an eternal, universal Decree, " if pursued in a just way of Reasoning, lays ^{Page} " all the Sins and Miseries that are in the " World on God, as the *sole Author* of *them*; " and makes him the only Being in the Universe " that acts irregularly, that is, contrary to " the Rules of eternal Reason and Fitness. It " destroys at once all moral Government in the " World, and leaves no room for any such " Thing as Virtue and Vice in the Creatures, " for Rewards or Punishments. In a Word, " says he, it jumbles Heaven, and Earth, and " Hell, and all together. Wou'd not a good, " sober judicious Heathen tremble to hear it " said, that God decreed all the Villainy and " Wickedness that is in the World " ? *He goes on*; " Among all the Notions in Divinity, which " have been mark'd with Heresy and Damnation I know not one that is more shocking " to me than this, That God has decreed from " Eternity, whatever comes to pass in time. " Had I not, adds he, as well be an *Atheist*, " as own a supreme Being, a first Cause, and " at the same time conceive of this Being as " an Almighty — ? I cannot utter it. They " indeed

“ indeed, adds he, who entertain this Notion,
 “ will not own the true Consequences of it.
 “ They make a shift to Satisfy themselves by
 “ some *senceless Distinctions*. I have (he tells
 “ us) known it said that God decreed the Sin-
 “ ful Actions of Men; but do not remember
 “ that I ever knew one so hardy, as to say that
 “ God is the *Author of Sin*”. And then he
 concludes, “ However, I verily believe this
 “ Notion has had a pernicious Influence upon
 “ Men’s Manners, and has been attended with
 “ very ill Consequences in human Life ; but I
 “ wonder, and I bless God, that it has not been
 “ attended with worse”.

Having gone thro’ the *six* Principles in my
Preface, and shewn under each of them, how
 far we are agreed or disagreed ; it will be easy
 for the *Reader* to observe that the Points in
 Controversy between you and me are chiefly
three.

1. You affirm, there are *some Events* were
 eternally certain *without* a Decree. This I
 deny ; and say, as *no Events* were certain *before*
 the Decree, so *no other Events* became certain
upon the Decree, but what were contained *in*
 the Decree.

2. You hold, God *foreknew from Eternity*,
 that all the *Sins* of the Creature *would be* ; and
 yet *never decreed* they *should be*. Whereas I
 contend, if God *ever knew* they *would be*, it is
 because he *ever decreed* they *should be* : Or, if
 it was to the *Honour* of the Divine *Will* not
 to *decree* that such Wickednesses *should be*, it
 could

could be no *Disbonour* to the Divine *Mind*, not to *know* from Eternity they *would be*; but only that they *might* or *might not be*.

3. You maintain, that *some* Events are both *future* and *contingent*; what *will certainly be*, and yet *may never be*. This I also deny; and say, While it is true they *may never be*, it cannot be true they *certainly will be*: Or, when it is once true they *certainly will be*, it is also true that they *must be*.

Upon this *last* Point in Difference depend the other two: Because if there be no Events *contingent* and yet *certain*, it can be no Dispute, Whether any *contingent* Events were *eternally* certain *without a Decree*? Or, whether they could be *known* to be so, but *in the Decree*? Since upon this Supposition they will not be *certain at all*, and therefore could not be *known* as such.

So that you see, Sir, the Debate betwixt us may be reduced to this *single Question*, *Whether it CAN be true of the same Event, at the same time, both that it WILL BE, and yet MAY NOT BE*? Or, in other Words, *Whether there be any such Things as FUTURE CONTINGENCIES*. To instance in *Adam's Fall*; Whether it could be both *ever true* that he *would fall*, and yet *really true* that he *might have prevented* his Fall? My Opinion is, There is a *Necessity* either to deny the *real Possibility* of his *standing*, or to deny the *eternal Certainty* of his *falling*. As the *Affirmative* is what you hold in both, the *Proof* lies at your Door.

I have

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I have nothing to do, but to wait your Arguments: yet to shorten the Work, I design an Appendix to this Letter, in which I shall endeavour to evince, that *your Side* of the Question *cannot be proved*; nay, that the *Contradiction* to it is *true and demonstrable*. And in the mean time, I beg leave to subscribe my self,

SIR,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

New Sarum,
March 10,
1730.



SAM. FANCOURT.

